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MR. RANDOLPH ON WOMEN AND SERVANTS.

CHARLOTTE COURT-HOUSE, }
VIRGINIA, Nov., 1858. }

 SEND you a copy of a peculiar production of one of the most peculiar of men—the Hon. John Randolph of Roanoke. It is a faithful copy of the original, which was read as evidence in the celebrated legal proceedings instituted to set aside the last will and testament of Mr. Randolph, on the grounds of his being *non compos*. The incident which elicited the strange medley was as follows: He had been visiting in this village at the house of a friend, and after his return he missed his pocket-knife. A messenger was at once sent from his plantation at Roanoke, distant about ten miles; and when the knife was not found, a very free expression of sentiment was indulged in, to the effect that Jasper, the “little yellow boy,” had pocketed it. Messengers were sent twice respecting the lost article before it was found, and a special dispatch, as below, when it came to light.

It may add something to the interest of this communication for me to say, that my residence is now in the same house at which Mr. Randolph was a guest, and that I have many times occupied the bedroom he insisted he had lost the knife in, but in blissful ignorance of the celebrity who had preceded me. Jasper, the “yellow boy,” is yet living near here, a faithful old slave, who can tell many things of interest, respecting the eccentric guest of his old master, M.

“ROANOKE, }
“Saturday, Dec. 17, 1831—12½. }

“DEAR M——: On taking out my chariot this morning, for the first time since I got home from your house, to clean it and the harness (for this dreadful spell of weather has froze us all up until to-day), the *knife* was found in the bottom of the carriage, where it must have dropped from a shallow waistcoat pocket, as I got in at your door, for I missed the knife soon afterward. When I got home, I had the pocket of the chariot searched, and everything there taken out, and it was not until John had searched strictly into my portmanteau

and bag, taking out every article therein, that I became fully convinced of what I was before perfectly persuaded—that I had left the knife in my chamber at your house, on Tuesday, the 6th; and when I heard it had not been seen, I took it for granted that your little yellow boy, having *found it*, had, according to the negro code of morality, appropriated it to himself. In this, it seems, I was mistaken, and I ask his pardon, as the best amends I can make *him*; and at the same time, to relieve you and Mrs. M. from the unpleasant feeling such a suspicion would occasion, I dispatch this note by a special messenger, although I have certain conveyance to-morrow.

“I make no apology to yourself or Mrs. M., for the frank expression of my suspicion, because *Truth* is the goddess at whose shrine I worship; and no Huguenot in France, or Morisco in Spain, or Judaizing Christian in Portugal, ever paid more dearly for his heretical schism, than I have done for leaving the established Church of *Falsehood* and *Grimace*. I am well aware that ladies are as delicate as they are charming creatures, and that in our intercourse with them we must strain the truth as far as possible. Brought up from earliest infancy to disguise their real sentiments (for a woman would be a monster who did not practise this disguise), it is their privilege to be insincere, and we should despise them, and justly too, if they had that manly frankness which constitutes the ornament of our character as the very reverse does of theirs. We must, therefore, keep this in view in our intercourse with them, and recollect that as our point of honor is courage and frankness, theirs is chastity and *dissimulation*; for, as I said before, a woman who does not dissemble her real feelings, is a monster of impudence. Now, therefore, *it does so happen* (as Mr. Canning would say), that truth is very offensive to the ears of a lady, when to those of a gentleman (her husband for instance) it would not be at all so.

“To illustrate, Mrs. R—— of B——, my brother's widow, was beyond all comparison, the nicest and best housewife I ever saw. Not one drop of water was ever suffered to stand upon her sideboard, except what was in the pitcher; the house, from cellar to garret, and in every part, as clean as hands could make it, and everything as it should be to suit even

my fastidious taste. I lived there after my brother's death, from 1796 to 1810 inclusive, and never did I see or smell anything to offend my senses or my imagination *but* once. Except in Autumn, I would defy you to find a leaf or feather in the yard. No poultry were permitted to come into it, and we had no dirty children, white or negro, to make litter or filth. A strong enclosure of sawn plank, eight feet high, fenced in the kitchen, smoke-house, ice-house, and wood-house, in which for the use of the house the wood was stacked away under lock and key. The turkey and hen houses were in the same enclosure, which had two doors, one next the dwelling-house, for the use of the mistress and house servants, and one large enough to admit a wagon on the back or north side, beyond which was a well built quarter, with two brick chimneys, and two rooms with fireplaces, and four rooms without, for servants. There was also (what I had forgot), a spinning and weaving house.

“At night the door of this enclosure was locked up—not a servant being allowed to sleep within it, although every one of them was within sound of the lady's bell.

“On one unhappy day, in a very hot and damp spell of weather of long continuance, a piece of cold lamb was brought to table that was spoiled—the first and last instance in nearly fifteen years of the slightest neglect in household economy. I ordered the servant to take it away, it being spoiled. Mrs. R—— resented this, and flatly contradicted me, and although the lamb absolutely stunk, she ate a part of it to prove her words true, and was affronted with me almost past forgiveness. I dare say if I had not noticed the lamb, she might have given a hint to the servant to take it away; but the honest, naked truth was not to be borne. We had no company but D—— and her younger son, three school boys, and an Englishman named Knowles, who acted as overseer or steward, and dined with us until he took to drink. Mrs. R—— stoutly denied that the lamb could be spoiled, *because* it had been boiled only the day before, and had been in the ice-house ever since. I admitted her facts, but denied her *logic*, which was truly a woman's. I maintained that the highest evidence was that of the senses; that we must reason *from* facts when we *could* get at them. and it was only when we

could not, that it was fair to argue from probabilities; that the lamb stunk, and therefore was not sound. This she denied, and to prove her words, actually made a shift to swallow half a mouthful, which, under other circumstances, she would not have done for a thousand dollars.

"So much for the ladies, charming creatures, the salt of the earth, whom, like Toby and all other old bachelors, I never could thoroughly understand for want of the key of matrimony, which alone can unlock their secrets, and make plain (as many a husband can tell), all the apparent contradictions in their character. Yes, so much for the fairer and better part of creation (as from my soul I believe them to be) but who, as the Waverley man says of kings, are *kittle cattle to shoe behind*. And so it ought to be, for it is their poor and almost only privilege to kick, while we roam where we will, and they must sit still until they are asked, I, therefore, am for upholding them in all their own proper privileges, as long as they don't encroach upon those of men. A woman who unsexes herself, deserves to be treated, and will be treated, as a man.

"As to the honesty of servants, I have always thought mine 'indifferent honest,' as Hamlet says, and yet I should have been very sorry that the boy that bears this letter should find my knife, or either of the two little urchins that you see here about the yard.

"I didn't take it, master' (for a negro never steals), 'I didn't take it, sir; I find (found) it.' What virtue in terms! Corporal Nym, a high professor and practitioner in the art of taking, says: 'The wise call it convey.' In Shakspeare. I never knew but three mulattoes whom I believed to be honest; and out of near 300, I have not a dozen slaves that will not 'take' or 'convey.'

"John is as honest as you and I are. So is old Hetty, I know, and several of the children I believe. Queen is very honest; she is too lazy to steal. Juba is so-so, but not strictly honest; he is a finder sometimes, and can be trusted with anything but money, with which he will buy whiskey.

"My regards to Mrs. M.

"Truly yours,

"J. R. of Roanoke."

BYRON, AND THE MISTY SCHOOL.

By J. Wright Simmons

BYRON'S contempt for Southey, Bowles and Wordsworth, led him, from the force of association, to transfer to the idols the hatred he bore to the idolators. Truth, he should have remembered, lies in a well. Art digs the well, but Nature supplies the water. The association of power is with the water, not the well. And so in every other instance of a blending of the two. Nature is always in the ascendant. Dislike for the men of the misty school betrayed their opponent into a fanatical zeal in favor of the exaggerated claims of Art, and caused him to lose sight of the true issue. He employed himself in contending about appearances merely. The real question was not, whether Nature, in every instance, is more poetical without Art, but whether it is not always more poetical than Art. The nature of a river might not be the less poetical for certain artificial adjuncts, but it is not dependent upon them for its poetry; whereas, the adjuncts, if placed in the middle of a street, would only be laughed at. In the same way, the Pyramids are indebted for their sublimity to the desert in which they stand. Remove them to Tripoli or Tunis, and they would dwindle into comparative insignificance.

In Mrs. Radcliffe's poetic description of an abbey, seen by twilight, the images are in the highest degree sublime, associated as they are with night and doom, and unknown worlds! Nature confers poetry; Art only assists it. In all her moods, and forms, and sights and sounds, Nature imparts to us, as it were, a portion of her own existence. She borrows from us nothing; but is invested with a feeling and a sense that transfuse themselves into us the moment we approach her. She is possessed of a poetry of her own. Art derives its poetry from association, but never in the same degree. Nature is the great original. Art the copy.

"When Shakespeare groups into one the most sublime objects in creation," says Campbell, "he fixes on the 'cloud-capt towers, the gorgeous palaces, the solemn temples.'" But there are no such towers in creation. Even the one at Shinar fell short of the clouds. The

temples are merely solemn; and, as to the palaces, where did Campbell ever see a sublime palace? But does not the image of the "great globe itself" transcend them all? To select the altar of the temple as an illustration of sublimity, and overlook the temple itself, was a singularly inverted process. Campbell's own image of the "ship of the line," is indebted for its poetry to associations with external nature and with death. The associations of Art are known and limited; those of Nature endless and eternal.

The citations from Milton of the Satanic shield and spear are not to the purpose—the exclusive purpose, that is, to which the author of the Specimens applies them—the passage presenting us with blended images from Nature and Art, while the superiority is clearly on the side of the former. The optic glass of the Tuscan artist pales before the image, of "evening," the valley of the Arno, and the "new lands, rivers, or mountains" with which it is associated. The "spear ethereal," too, derives its poetry from association with the "hills"—particularly "Norwegian hills," rocky and barren—and not the artificial objects.

Campbell's remark about Homer's being "a minute describer of the works of art," is entirely gratuitous—since Nature and Art lie both within the ample domain of the poet.* But when the question is put, which is the more poetical? the answer is inevitable. The poetry of Nature is absolute and transcendent; that of Art relative and of an entirely subordinate character.

It follows, then, that images derived from the former are always more poetical than those suggested by works of Art.

The decision of the question is thus clearly against Byron, although it by no means involves an indorsement of the principles of the "misty school."

* Having utterly failed as a poet, Bulwer makes the notable discovery that poets are corruptors of the species! Were Milton, Gray, Goldsmith, Cowper (to name no others), "corruptors of the species?" The idea is certainly a progressive one; but, then, Bulwer himself says that "progress is not always improvement," and in this silly sentence upon poets he furnishes an instance against himself of the correctness of his own remark. But has the uxorious Baronet, in his character of novelist, taken the beam from his own eye? Has he been doing penance for the sin of "Falkland" that he undertakes to talk about poets as "corruptors of the species?" Had he leveled the remark against two thirds of those who constitute the class of writers to which he himself belongs, I would have been disposed to regard him as a repentant sinner.